AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1-63. (Canceled)

64. (Currently amended) A method executed by a server that comprises hardware components for dynamically managing a user software license, the method comprising:

receiving a request at the server from a client to access a software feature on the client, wherein the request includes a software identifier that uniquely identifies the software and a hardware configuration identifier corresponding to a hardware profile of the client;

retrieving a previously stored hardware configuration identifier and a modification date for the previously stored hardware configuration identifier based at least on the received software identifier;

determining that the received hardware configuration identifier is different from the hardware configuration identifier previously stored on the server;

determining that a rate of modification for the hardware configuration is less than a permitted rate of modification for the hardware configuration, wherein the rate of modification is based on the difference between a current date and the modification date for the previously stored ~~a~~ hardware configuration identifier ~~modification date stored on the server is less than a predetermined value~~; and

returning software license information to the client to prevent access to the software feature.

65. (Previously presented) The method of claim 64, wherein retrieving previously stored hardware configuration identifier comprises retrieving a set of stored software license information corresponding to the software identifier.

66. (Currently amended) The method of claim 64, wherein the hardware configuration identifier contains information representing a ~~sufficient number~~ plurality of hardware components to identify a client computer.~~,~~

67. (Previously presented) The method of claim 64, wherein the hardware configuration identifier comprises a hash of values corresponding to a number of selected components on a client computer.

68. (Currently amended) A method executed by a server that comprises hardware components for dynamically managing a user software license, the method comprising:

receiving a request at the server from a client to access a software feature on the client, wherein the request includes a software identifier that uniquely identifies the software and a hardware configuration identifier corresponding to a hardware profile of the client;

retrieving a previously stored hardware configuration identifier and a modification date for the previously stored hardware configuration identifier based at least on the received software identifier;

determining that the received hardware configuration identifier is different from the hardware configuration identifier previously stored on the server;

determining that a rate of modification for the hardware configuration is less than a permitted rate of modification for the hardware configuration, wherein the rate of modification is based on the difference between a current date and the modification date for the previously stored ~~a~~ hardware configuration identifier modification date~~ stored on the server is greater than a predetermined value~~;

updating the stored hardware configuration identifier with the received hardware identifier;

updating the hardware configuration identifier modification date with the current date; and

returning software license information to the client to grant access to the software feature.

69. (Previously presented) The method of claim 68, wherein retrieving previously stored hardware configuration identifier comprises retrieving a set of stored software license information corresponding to the software identifier.

70. (Currently amended) The method of claim 68, wherein the hardware configuration identifier contains information representing a ~~sufficient number~~ plurality of hardware components to identify a client computer.

71. (Previously presented) The method of claim 68, wherein the hardware configuration identifier comprises a hash of values corresponding to a number of selected components on a client computer.

72. (Currently amended) A computer readable storage medium storing instructions which when executed by a computer cause the computer to perform a method for dynamically managing a user software license, the method comprising:

receiving a request at the server from a client to access a software feature on the client, wherein the request includes a software identifier that uniquely identifies the software and a hardware configuration identifier corresponding to a hardware profile of the client;

retrieving a previously stored hardware configuration identifier and a modification date for the previously stored hardware configuration identifier based at least on the received software identifier;

determining that the received hardware configuration identifier is different from the hardware configuration identifier previously stored on the server;

determining that a rate of modification for the hardware configuration is less than a permitted rate of modification for the hardware configuration, wherein the rate of modification is based on the difference between a current date and the modification date for the previously stored ~~a~~ hardware configuration identifier modification date~~ stored on the server is less than a predetermined value~~; and

returning software license information to the client to prevent access to the software feature.

73. (Previously presented) The computer readable storage medium of claim 72, wherein retrieving previously stored hardware configuration identifier comprises retrieving a set of stored software license information corresponding to the software identifier.

74. (Currently amended) The computer readable storage medium of claim 72, wherein the hardware configuration identifier contains information representing a ~~sufficient number~~ plurality of hardware components to identify a client computer.~~.~~

75. (Previously presented) The computer readable storage medium of claim 72, wherein the hardware configuration identifier comprises a hash of values corresponding to a number of selected components on a client computer.

76. (Currently amended) A computer readable storage medium storing instructions which when executed by a computer cause the computer to perform a method for dynamically managing a user software license, the method comprising:

receiving a request at the server from a client to access a software feature on the client, wherein the request includes a software identifier that uniquely identifies the software and a hardware configuration identifier corresponding to a hardware profile of the client;

retrieving a previously stored hardware configuration identifier and a modification date for the previously stored hardware configuration identifier based at least on the received software identifier;

determining that the received hardware configuration identifier is different from the hardware configuration identifier previously stored on the server;

determining that a rate of modification for the hardware configuration is less than a permitted rate of modification for the hardware configuration, wherein the rate of modification is based on the difference between a current date and the modification date for the previously stored ~~a~~ hardware configuration identifier modification date ~~stored on the server is greater than a predetermined value~~;

updating the stored hardware configuration identifier with the received hardware identifier;

updating the hardware configuration identifier modification date with the current date; and

returning software license information to the client to grant access to the software feature.

77. (Previously presented) The computer readable storage medium of claim 76, wherein retrieving previously stored hardware configuration identifier comprises retrieving a set of stored software license information corresponding to the software identifier.

78. (Currently amended) The computer readable storage medium of claim 76, wherein the hardware configuration identifier contains information representing a ~~sufficient number~~ plurality of hardware components to identify a client computer.

79. (Previously presented) The computer readable storage medium of claim 76, wherein the hardware configuration identifier comprises a hash of values corresponding to a number of selected components on a client computer.

80. (Currently amended) A computer system for dynamically managing a user software license, the computer system comprising:

a processor;

a memory;

a receiving mechanism configured to receive a request at the server from a client to access a software feature on the client, wherein the request includes a software identifier that uniquely identifies the software and a hardware configuration identifier corresponding to a hardware profile of the client;

a retrieval mechanism configured to retrieve a previously stored hardware configuration identifier and a modification date for the previously stored hardware configuration identifier based at least on the received software identifier;

a first determination mechanism configured to determine that the received hardware configuration identifier is different from the hardware configuration identifier previously stored on the server;

a second determination mechanism configured to determine that a rate of modification for the hardware configuration is less than a permitted rate of modification for the hardware configuration, wherein the rate of modification is based on the difference between a current date and the modification date for the previously stored ~~a~~ hardware configuration identifier modification date~~ stored on the server is less than a predetermined value~~; and

a communication mechanism configured to return software license information to the client to prevent access to the software feature.

81. (Previously presented) The computer system of claim 80, wherein while retrieving previously stored hardware configuration identifier, the retrieval mechanism is configured to retrieve a set of stored software license information corresponding to the software identifier.

82. (Currently amended) The computer system of claim 80, wherein the hardware configuration identifier contains information representing a ~~sufficient number~~ plurality of hardware components to identify a client computer.~~.~~

83. (Previously presented) The computer system of claim 80, wherein the hardware configuration identifier comprises a hash of values corresponding to a number of selected components on a client computer.

84. (Currently amended) A computer system executed by a server that comprises hardware components for dynamically managing a user software license, the computer system comprising:

a processor;

a memory;

a receiving mechanism configured to receive a request at the server from a client to access a software feature on the client, wherein the request includes a software identifier that uniquely identifies the software and a hardware configuration identifier corresponding to a hardware profile of the client;

a retrieval mechanism configured to retrieve a previously stored hardware configuration identifier and a modification date for the previously stored hardware configuration identifier based at least on the received software identifier;

a first determination mechanism configured to determine that the received hardware configuration identifier is different from the hardware configuration identifier previously stored on the server;

a second determination mechanism configured to determine that a rate of modification for the hardware configuration is less than a permitted rate of modification for the hardware configuration, wherein the rate of modification is based on the difference between a current date and the modification date for the previously stored ~~a~~ hardware configuration identifier modification date ~~stored on the server is greater than a predetermined value~~;

a first updating mechanism configured to update the stored hardware configuration identifier with the received hardware identifier;

a second updating mechanism configured to update the hardware configuration identifier modification date with the current date; and a communication mechanism configured to return software license information to the client to grant access to the software feature.

85. (Previously presented) The computer system of claim 84, wherein while retrieving previously stored hardware configuration identifier, the retrieval mechanism is configured to retrieve a set of stored software license information corresponding to the software identifier.

86. (Currently Amended) The computer system of claim 84, wherein the hardware configuration identifier contains information representing a ~~sufficient number~~ plurality of hardware components to identify a client computer.

87. (Previously presented) The computer system of claim 84, wherein the hardware configuration identifier comprises a hash of values corresponding to a number of selected components on a client computer.